

Carolina, Puerto Rico

Analysis Of:

**“The Monkey’s Paw” (by W.W. Jacobs)**

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**…**"Be careful what you wish for, you may receive it."

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ENGL 126

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Section: MW 10:00am

1. **Synopsis**:

"The Monkey's Paw" is a [horror](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horror_fiction) [short story](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Short_story) by author [W. W. Jacobs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/W._W._Jacobs). It was published in England in 1902.The story centers on a monkey's death paw which is a talisman and has magical powers. It gives to its owner three wishes that come with a horrible price for interfering with destiny. The monkey's paw is given to a family of three, father, mother, and son. They wish for some money, and the next day an employee of the company where the son is working arrives at the family's residence and tells the parents that their son has died in an accident and they will receive a monetary compensation, the exact amount they wished for. About a week later, the mother wishes that their son would return home alive. When knocking is heard at the door, the father realizes what has happened and before the mother can open the door, the father uses the last wish. The knocking stops and when the door is opened, no one is there.

1. **Biography**

William Wymark Jacobs (1863–1943) is a writer of short stories, is a novelist, and dramatist. He was born in London, England. His father was a wharf manager, and Jacobs grew up near the docks of Wapping, London; many of his later stories reflect his early experiences near the Thames seaport. As a child, he was educated in private schools and entered the civil service as a clerk in 1879, a job that he hated. Around the age of twenty, he began to write humorous articles, sketches, and stories. His first collection of short stories established Jacobs as a popular humorist in the early twentieth century. He also wrote comic stories set on the London waterfront, horror stories, and crime tales. Critics applaud his dry humor, colorful dialogue, and spare narrative style. In the last few decades of his life, he wrote very little beyond a few adaptations of his stories for the stage. Jacobs is best remembered today for his classic tale of horror, “The Monkey's Paw.” After his death, Jacobs and his work lapsed into relative obscurity and he is viewed today as a minor writer.

1. **Literary Theories Applied**
2. Reception and Reader Response:

This theory is applied to all literary works. In this short story we can analyze the culture and values of the characters by our own interpretation. The aspect that catches my attention the most, and shows the value and culture of the characters, was the family poverty that did not think in the consequences of their action using the monkey’s paw to obtain money. Meanwhile the paw grants you three wishes, I think is just one because you tried to cancel one another and make a horrible big mess. This horror story is really interesting and keeps you reading until the end, and shows the debility of the human mind beyond the unknown powers of the magic. Definitely, the hidden moral is to reader is to accept and value what you have, if not accept the cost of the risk you will make. In a another way of analyzing the story one could said what would happen if the character just wish for happiness, no matter what is the penalty it can not hurt you.

1. Structuralism:

The structure in *The Money’s Paw* is famous. Is basically built by: a source that grants you three wishes, a group or person who desires it and terrible consequence to pay for you wishes. This general is structure is used in a big variety of novels, stories, movies, plays, etc. Some of this are: *The House of Horror* 2 in the Simpsons cartoon; the episode “[The Man in the Bottle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Man_in_the_Bottle)" in the [*The Twilight Zone*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Twilight_Zone)(using a genie in a bottle instead of a monkey’s paw); the episode “Forever” in the series [*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buffy_the_Vampire_Slayer_(TV_series))*;* The book *Prom Nights From Hell*: a novel consisting of 5 short stories written by [Meg Cabot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meg_Cabot), [Stephenie Meyer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephenie_Meyer), [Kim Harrison](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kim_Harrison), [Michele Jaffe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michele_Jaffe) and [Lauren Myracle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lauren_Myracle); television anime like [*xxxHolic*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/XxxHolic) (episode 080, and  [*Suruga Monkey*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bakemonogatari#Episode_list). These creations make themselves adaptations of the other one, principally the short story analyzed.

1. Psychoanalytical Theory:

This theory can be applied by studying the action of the character of Mr. and Mrs. White (the parents) at the end of the short story. We can conclude that they kill their son two times in the story, first indirectly (in a macabre consequence of the wish, that the did not were suppose to wish) and then were the mother wish that her son came from death (second wish) and the end when they open the door and their son was not there because the father wish again for his son’s death. This series of behaviors are Filicide (a deliberate act of a parent killing their own son).

1. Archtypal:

This theory is represented through the magical o supernatural power of the monkey’s paw to grant wishes in this case three.

1. Existentialism:

We can apply this theory in the first death of the son (the first wish), in his "resurrection" (the second wish made by the mother) and his next death (the last wish).

1. **References**

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